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Serial No. 10/780,743

Amendment

Responsive to Office Action dated August 28, 2008

MAR 02 2009

KAS-199

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing apparatus comprising:

a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

rails, said sample probes being mounted to said rails;

sample probes that move along said rails from a sample sucking position to a sample discharge position; and

a controller for controlling said sample probes to reciprocally move between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned at said sample suction position being discharged into a reaction cuvette that is moved and positioned at said sample discharge position by using said plurality of sample probes,

wherein said rails make a closed loop including said sample ~~sucking~~suction position and said sample discharge position;

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each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position, and

a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths.

10. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said closed loop has substantially an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample probe.

11. – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said controller stops use of any of said sample probes and controls carrying out sampling by another one of said sampling probes.

14. (Previously Presented) An automatic analyzer including a sample dispensing apparatus according to claim 9.

15. (Currently Amended) A sample dispensing method for an analyzing apparatus comprising the steps of:

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dispensing samples from a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

mounting said sample probes to rails and moving said sample probes along said rails from a position for ~~suctioning~~^{sucking} a sample to a sample discharge position; and

controlling said sample probes to move reciprocally between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned at said sample suction position being discharged into a reaction cuvette that is moved and positioned at said sample discharge position by using said plurality of sample probes,

wherein said movement of said sample probes makes a closed loop including said sample ~~sucking~~^{suction} position and said sample discharge position;

each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharging position, and

a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths.

16. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing method according to claim 15, including moving said sample probes in said closed loop along a path that is substantially of an elliptical shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample nozzle.

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17. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) A sample dispensing method according to claim 15, wherein said controlling includes a stopping operation with one said nozzle and carrying out sampling by another said nozzle.